

Report of Chief Officer Housing

Report to Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

Date: 5 March 2020

Subject: Housing: Performance relating to Responsive Repairs and Voids

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary

1. Main issues

- a. Further to the implementation of a Scrutiny Working Group in September 2018, as requested by this Environment, Housing and Communities (EC&H) Board, further analysis and investigation has been carried out to interrogate the performance of the Housing Responsive Repairs services provided across the city by Mears and Leeds Building Services. The current contractual arrangements have been in place following a competitive procurement process in 2011.
- b. Performance is currently reported and managed against the following contractual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Housing Responsive Repairs and Voids:

Responsive Repairs

- RR1 Same Day Fix (including Adapts)
- RR2 Repairs Completed Within Target (including Adapts)
- RR3 Appointments Kept
- RR6 Customer Satisfaction (The service provided by the workers who carried out the repair)

Voids (Empty Properties)

- EP1 Completions within 15 days (construction / refurbishment works)

- Performance is also reported against an internal indicator (non contractual), BV212 “Voids Overall Turnaround Time”, which includes activity around allocating and securing a letting.
- c. This report provides an overview of how the delivery of these services has performed across the city since 2018 (when the in-depth working group review was requested) up to present date, including relevant activity undertaken to improve performance and deliver continuous improvement.
- d. The performance of both Mears (South and West of the city) and LBS (East of the city) is being closely monitored and managed to ensure standards are improved or maintained across the city from 2021 as the services in the South are transferred into LBS and are re-procured in the West.
- e. It should be noted that the performance of either of the two PFI Contracts in Little London, Beeston Hill and Holbeck, and in Swarcliffe has not been considered by the working group, or in this report.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- Delivering a high performing housing repair and maintenance service supports the council’s ambition for Leeds to be a compassionate and caring city that tackles poverty and reduces inequality. Through the provision of these services we ensure that our tenants, including some of the most vulnerable people in our city, are able to live in safe, accessible and well maintained homes.
- The services contribute to the following Best Council Plan ambitions:
 - a. Housing – in particular housing of the right quality, and the Best City key performance indicator of percentage of council housing repairs completed within target; and
 - b. Safe, Strong Communities – in particular keeping people safe from harm and protecting the most vulnerable.

3. Resource Implications

- High performance against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and continual improvement across the Housing Repairs and Voids service will in turn drive value for money and improved outputs for the service and customers.

4. Recommendations

- It is recommended that the Board:
 - a. note the contents of this report

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an update on performance relating to housing responsive repairs and voids, following the establishment of the Scrutiny Working Group: Housing Repairs in September 2018.

2. Background information

- 2.1 This Environment, Housing and Communities (EC&H) Board requested further analysis and investigation around the performance of the Housing Responsive Repairs services provided across the city by Mears and Leeds Building Services in 2018. The current contractual arrangements have been in place following a competitive procurement process in 2011.
- 2.2 A report with performance data from August 2019 was also provided to the Board in October 2019 following the Executive Board paper relating to the 'Procurement of Housing Responsive Repairs and Voids Services for the West of the Leeds.'
- 2.3 The table below shows the current arrangements by numbers of council homes managed in each area of the city, as an indication of scale of service activity. It should be noted that the working group and this report has not considered properties managed under either of the two PFI contracts in the city – focusing on the services provided by Mears and LBS.

Area	Service Provider	No. homes
South	Mears	14,055
West	Mears	19,582
East	LBS	16,905
Total		50,542
PFI managed properties – excluded from this analysis		
LLBHH	SC4L	1,700
Swarcliffe	HCP	1,300

- 2.4 As per the October 2019 Executive Board Report, the decision has been taken to in-source the delivery of housing responsive repairs and voids services for the South of the city from 2021, meaning that Leeds Building Services (LBS) will deliver these services in the East & South of the city, with an external contractor to be procured for the West of the city. This will mean that LBS' housing responsive repairs and voids service delivery will expand by 83%; currently LBS cover approximately 33% of the city's homes (circa 17,000 of a total of circa 51,000 properties), which will increase to 61% (circa 31,000 properties) in 2021.
- 2.5 This report provides an overview of how the delivery of these services has performed across the city since 2018 (when the in-depth working group review was requested) up to present date, including relevant activity undertaken to improve performance and deliver continuous improvement.
- 2.6 The performance of both Mears (South and West of the city) and LBS (East of the city) is being closely monitored and managed to ensure standards are improved or maintained across the city from 2021 as the services in the South are transferred into LBS and are re-procured in the West.

3. Main issues

3.1 Performance is reported and managed against the following contractual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Housing Responsive Repairs and Voids:

Responsive Repairs

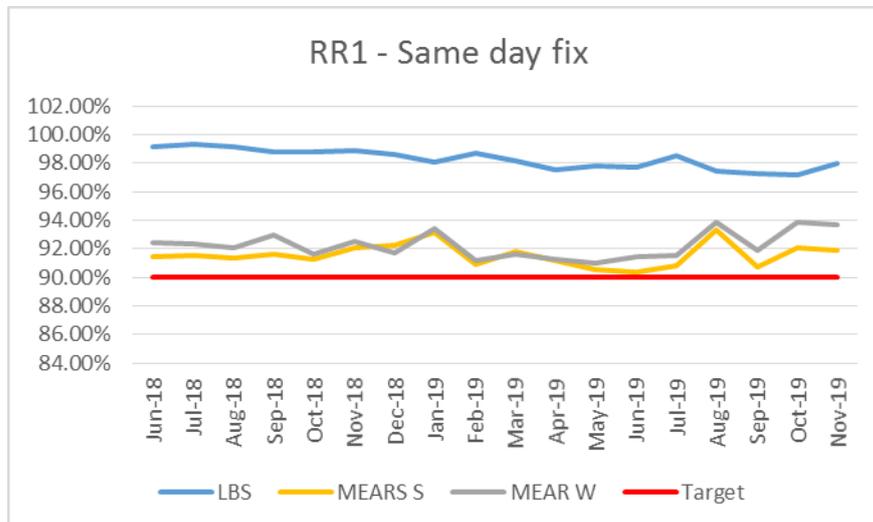
- RR1 Same Day Fix (including Adapts)
- RR2 Repairs Completed Within Target (including Adapts)
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Voids (Empty Properties)

- EP1 Completions within 15 days (construction / refurbishment works)
- Performance is also reported against an internal indicator (non contractual), BV212 "Voids Overall Turnaround Time", which includes activity around allocating and securing a letting.

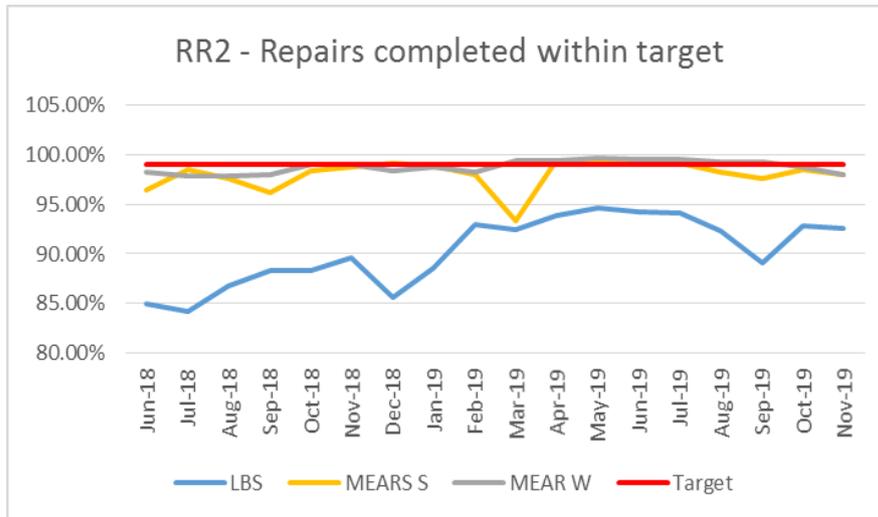
3.2 Historic data: Overview of LBS and Mears - June 2018 to December 2019

3.2.1 **Graph 1: RR1- same day fix:** Demonstrates an improvement on average across the city and consistently above target. LBS are performing better than the external contracts, which is interpreted to be a positive in terms of LBS' increasing service area.

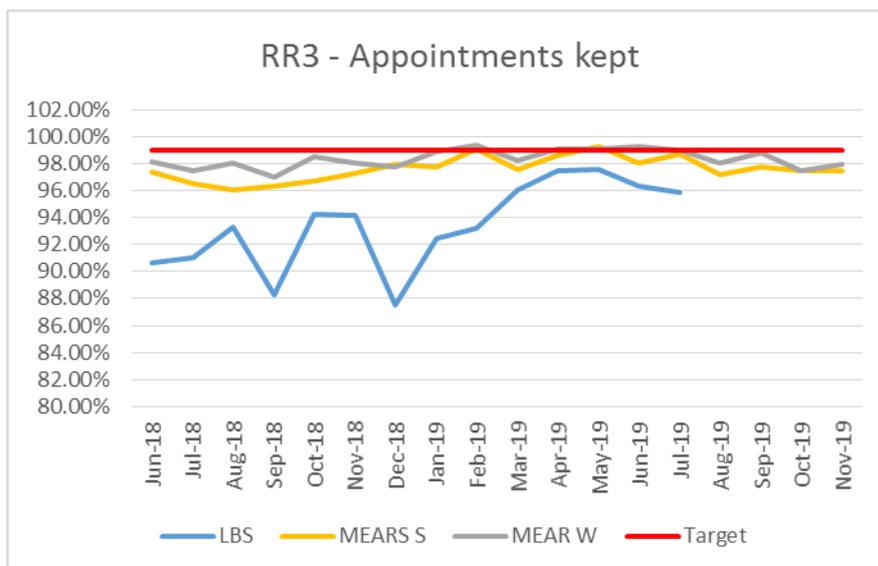


3.2.2 **Graph 2: RR2 – repairs completed within target:** Graph two shows a general improvement on average across the city, moving towards the target of 99%.

LBS has made substantial progress in the period (June 2018 achieved 85%, and November 2019 achieved 93%) and actions are being implemented to continue this trend – these include restructuring the planning team to ensure that operational planning becomes more efficient and alterations to the ICT system to ensure more dynamic scheduling in geographical areas. These positive trends show great potential and need to continue to ensure that service improvements are experienced by the tenants.

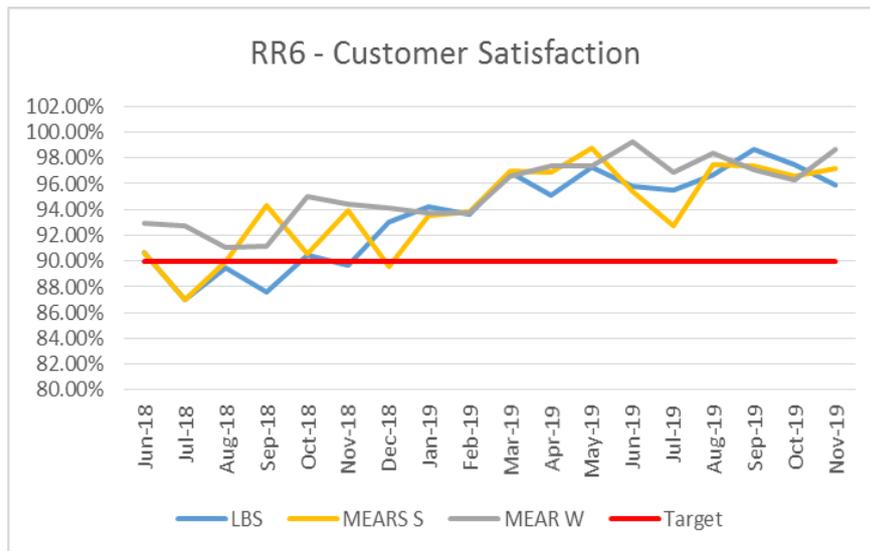


3.2.3 **Graph 3: RR3 – appointments kept:** The results for the external contract remain static just below the target and LBS were improving steadily towards the target. LBS appointment results are not currently available for RR3 (appointments kept) due to IT issues. However a manual workaround is being implemented so accurate figures can be reported.



3.2.4 Graph 4: RR6 – Customer Satisfaction: Customer Satisfaction is currently above target for all Contracts. It has improved on average across the city and is consistently about the target.

Actions being taken to try and embed continuous improvement for LBS. Further developments to on way text system, so that the tenant can text back instead of calling and is reminded of the appointment. Further developments have been made to the Total Optimize system (the dynamic workforce scheduling tool), which promotes itself as increasing staff productivity, reducing travel costs and times and increased KPI's, including Customer Satisfaction.



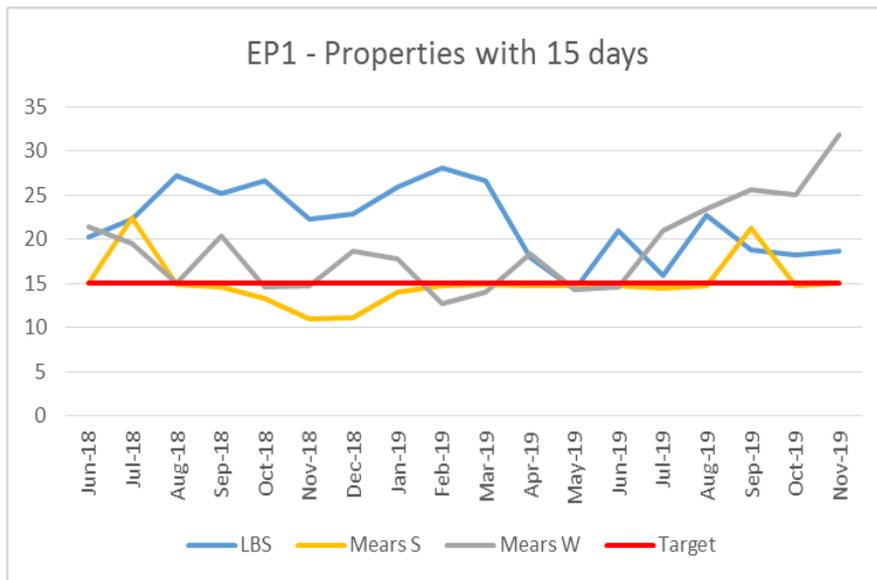
3.2.5 Graph 5: EP1 – Turnaround of works on void properties within 15 days

Performance against this target is clearly outside our expectations and requirements. In order to address this, a complete review of the whole voids and lettings process is underway, and a dedicated Task and Finish Group has been established to identify where immediate and longer-term improvements can be made.

Mears S performance has remained static around the target for the reporting period, whilst Mears W average days in void has increased since summer 2019.

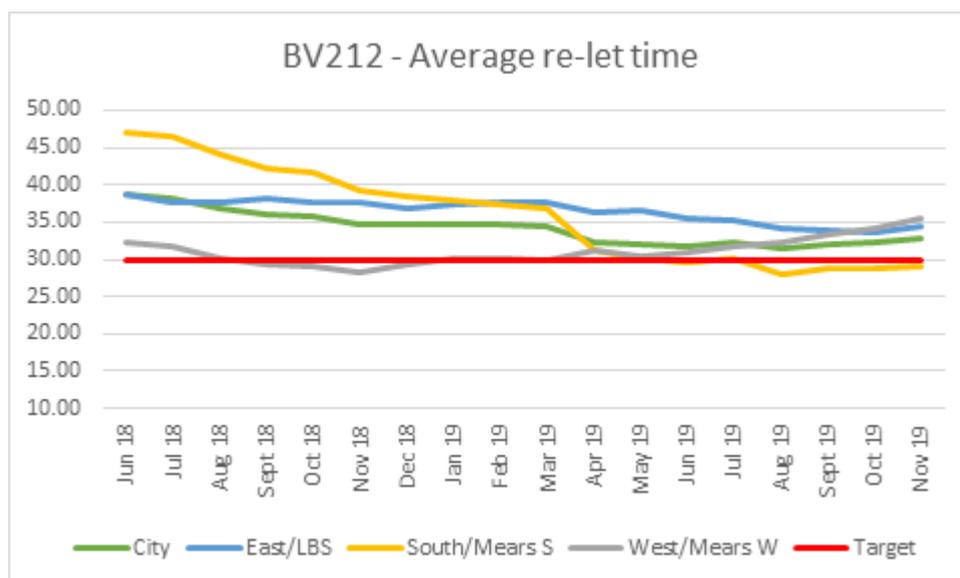
On average LBS performance is generally improving with a downward trend towards the target of 15 days.

Mears West Voids –the dip in performance is being carefully reviewed as this clearly is having a negative impact. Contractual mechanisms are being implemented, with Early Warning Notices being issued and deductions applied. A further performance report has also been submitted by Mears detailing actions to help improve performance.



3.2.6 Graph 6: BV212 – Average re-let time

Performance against this target broadly reflects performance against EP1, with effective action required to address issues of low performance. A detailed analysis of the data for this period has commenced and this shows an increase in the amount of external works, disrepair prevention works and plastering being carried out. While this clearly therefore takes more time and consequently negatively impacts on KPI performance, this is contributing positively to the overall quality of the home so careful consideration is being given to assess how best to address this. The dedicated Task and Finish Group mentioned above is taking this into account when considering standards, requirements, communications and timescales when re-letting properties. Future performance indicators for new contractual and internal arrangements are also being developed to incentivise better performance and behaviours.



3.3 External Contracts: In order to continue to drive service improvements through the Mears contracts, Leeds City Council are working in partnership with Mears through the regular Operational Core group and strategic core group meetings. These

forums are used to analyse performance and agree practical action plans where relevant. The contract promotes robust monitoring processes to be formally implemented, including issuing Early Warning Notices to pre-empt negative outcomes for customers prior to them occurring. The contract allows for formal frameworks to be in place to monitor progress of these workstreams and actions plans, identifying trends for early intervention if required.

Some specific examples include:

- External works for Voids – agreed to raise on separate order so works can start immediately from date of VP1
- Consistency of application of Technical Specification – toolbox talks to be arranged
- Damp profiling leading to an increase in clear cavities – LCC to provide equipment and training

3.4 Based on recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board Working Group and a CiH Working Together to Rethink Repairs & Maintenance report (Appendix a), Housing Leeds have established a “Rethinking Repairs” project which is focussing on process and system developments that have been identified as contributing to service improvements. Many of these tasks and workstreams interface with the work being undertaken to re-commission the Housing Responsive Repairs and Voids service across the city from 2021, influencing service requirements and performance indicators that will be delivered by our contractor(s) and internal provider.

3.4.1 **Contact centre and customer experience** – A full end to end review of the repair raising process will be carried out as part of the Re-thinking repairs project. This will involve all stakeholders including the contact centre, face-to-face customer service and Housing Management and will aim to streamline the number of avenues tenants can raise repair requests, making the customer experience the tenant receives broadly consistent. In addition this project aims to work with the contact centre on a number of initiatives to improve the customer experience, for example, working to automate how customer repair satisfaction responses are captured, with the aim of providing higher volume and more robust data in order to help drive further service improvements.

3.4.2 **Improving accuracy of repair raising** – This project will aim to channel all repair requests through a dedicated, trained team in order to reduce the number of inaccurate repair requests raised at the point of ordering. This project will also review and revise where necessary, key operational procedures in order to drive customer excellence, efficiency and cohesion between teams. For example, improving the ability for mobile working for LBS and technical officers as well as improving the planned and non-urgent repair work process. This review has already improved the access/no access process to be developed and included in the tender documentation for the West contract commencing in 2021.

3.4.3 **Decoration and lettings standards** - One of the key aims of this project is to improve tenant and customer satisfaction with the decoration and lettings standard. By rolling out a self-service repairs portal for the tenant to raise a repair online 24/7, at their convenience it will allow the service to operate more effectively in a growing digital environment and will provide guidance to tenants on repair timescales and expectations. In addition this project will work with IT teams to help develop a suite of monthly reports which identify high frequency

users of the service in order to help encourage interventions to react to these including targeted visits, disrepair prevention and targeted property MOT's, which will help improve the decoration and lettings standard of the properties within Leeds.

3.4.4 **Voids standards and lettings process** – A full end-to-end review of the standard of Leeds City Council void properties is being undertaken to improve outcomes for the customer. This review includes standards of refurbishment works, communications and updates for tenants prior to moving in and timescales and will include an appraisal of the opportunities to enhance the current Letting Standard by carrying out energy efficiency works during the void period.

3.5 Overview of partnership working with LBS to drive service improvements: LBS Change Project team are working closely with the Procurement team and Contract Project Managers to work on the Procurement strategy to ensure compliance across the sub-contractors and Key performance measures are put in place to help drive service improvements.

3.6 Interrogating our data: Work is being undertaken to drive more accurate performance reporting and robust data. Data is analysed on a weekly basis by Trades to highlight trends and identify any issues.

3.7 Responsive Repairs data reconciliation meetings are held with Mears and LBS to ensure the data is accurate and a true reflection of the work carried out.

3.8 New arrangements post 2021: how we can drive more positive, customer focussed behaviour

3.8.1 Revising our KPIs – monitoring what matters

A new KPI Framework has been developed, which includes a robust Performance and Payment mechanism for our external Contractors. The Performance mechanism also includes a Performance Improvement plan which will be used to ensure actions are taken if the Service provider fails to achieve the performance target. There are also more Customer focused KPI'S and Management Information required to identify a true picture of the Service being delivered, which will again help drive performance improvements.

3.8.2 Engaging with our customers

Prior to the Repairs and Investment Group which was held 18th November 2019, this group were sent the proposed new KPI'S for feedback. Following this feedback careful consideration was taken to review the feedback and proposed a reporting format which could be understood by all.

3.8.3 Producing accurate data

Data will continue to be integrated and scrutinised as part of the Performance Management Framework. Any anomalies will be dealt with at the monthly data reconciliation meetings with the Contractors.

3.8.4 The increase in this service provision by LBS supports greater direct control of service delivery, maintaining excellent knowledge in-house about council assets.

3.8.5 Externally procured contracts will provide opportunities for effective performance benchmarking.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.2 The following consultation and engagement has taken place with regards to the service provided for responsive repairs and voids in the city:

4.2.1 Feedback from the working group established by this Scrutiny Board in 2018 has (together with recommendations from the CiH report) informed the scope of works for the rethinking repairs project, and the basis on which performance against KPIs is monitored

4.2.2 Bi-monthly reporting into the Repairs and Investment Group (a forum available to support/work with the whole housing property function)

4.2.3 Bi-annual Star Survey takes place to gather residents feedback on the service provided. The next survey is due to take place in Autumn 2020, so feedback will be incorporated where relevant and possible into contractual and internal arrangements, along with service improvement plans for Housing

4.2.4 Customer feedback is received in relation to KPI RR6 (Customer Satisfaction) as reported above

4.2.5 Each new tenant is given the opportunity to participate in a satisfaction survey 3-4 weeks after moving into their homes

4.3 The Executive Member has been briefed as part of the ongoing meetings with Chief Officer Housing, and also as part of the development of this specific Scrutiny report.

4.4 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.4.1 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration screening and impact assessment was completed as part of the overarching Housing responsive repairs and voids programme, including the decisions on service delivery arrangements post 2021. This impact assessment was provided to the Executive Board and this EH&C Scrutiny Board in October 2019.

4.4.2 No specific findings relevant to the performance of this service provision were identified.

4.5 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

4.5.1 Delivering a high performing housing repair and maintenance service supports the council's ambition for Leeds to be a compassionate and caring city that tackles poverty and reduces inequality. Through the provision of these services we ensure that our tenants, including some of the most vulnerable people in our city, are able to live in safe, accessible and well maintained homes.

4.5.2 The services contribute to the following Best Council Plan ambitions:

- Housing – in particular housing of the right quality, and the Best City key performance indicator of percentage of council housing repairs completed within target; and
- Safe, Strong Communities – in particular keeping people safe from harm and protecting the most vulnerable.

Climate Emergency

4.5.3 At Full Council on 27 March 2019, Leeds City Council passed a motion declaring a Climate Emergency. In addition, the Leeds Climate Commission have proposed a

series of science based carbon reduction targets for the city so that Leeds can play its part in keeping global average surface temperature increases to no more than 1.5C.

4.5.4 The Climate Emergency will be fully taken into account when considering our future repairs and void strategy. Contractual targets are already set and managed with regards to amount of waste sent to landfill by both LBS and Mears (Target for Reduction in landfill is set at 97.6%). The procurement activity being undertaken will continue to monitor this, in addition to seeking to appoint contractors who can demonstrate they have arrangements in place within their organisation which reduce their impact on climate change, along with also being required to demonstrate what measures they will put in place to reduce emissions as a result of travelling. Specific performance indicators relating to the climate emergency are being carefully considered and developed for the contracts and internal arrangements post 2021.

4.5.5 The end to end review of

4.6 Resources, procurement and value for money

4.6.1 The continual monitoring and management of performance against contractual and non-contractual indicators is being undertaken irrespective of any specific procurement activity. Nonetheless there are irrefutable links with the upcoming re-commissioning of the city-wide responsive repairs and voids services which is being managed and reported on by a dedicated project team and Programme Board, chaired by the Chief Officer of Housing.

4.6.2 High performance against the KPIs and continual improvement will in turn drive value for money and improved outputs for the service and customers.

4.7 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.7.1 This report is for information and updates only, therefore there are no legal implications.

4.7.2 The future procurement and internal commissioning of the future Housing Responsive Repairs and Voids services is being managed as a separate project and is therefore following all required legal, contractual and decision-making processes through these project governance processes.

4.8 Risk management

4.8.1 Risk of underperformance against these indicators, resulting in negative customer experience, reduced value for money outputs (due to excessive down time / multiple visits per job / reduced income due to voids taking longer to turnaround).

5. Conclusions

5.1 Performance continues to be robustly monitored and managed across the service. Despite there being a general upwards trend which should be acknowledged, there continues to be areas where performance is not meeting targets or expectations so appropriate and focussed action is being taken to drive continuous improvements.

6. Recommendations

- It is recommended that the Board:
 - a. note the contents of this report

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1 Report to the EH&C Scrutiny Board on 17 October 2019: Future delivery of citywide housing repairs and voids services (item 47):

<https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1091&MId=8620>

- 7.2 Report to the EH&C Scrutiny Board on 28 June 2018: Performance Report (item 11):

<https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1091&MId=8404&Ver=4>

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.